



## **NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION**

**Empowering Drivers Since 1982**

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For Immediate Release

### **Michigan Bill Would Allow Automated Traffic Tickets Despite Objections of Motorists' Rights Advocates**

*Waunakee, WI – June 3, 2013:* Sometime soon, a trip to the grocery store could cost you a lot more than you expected. If eight Michigan representatives have their way, you could get a \$265 ticket – \$130 in state fines plus perhaps \$135 in local fines – in the mail for stopping six inches too far into a crosswalk, or for not pausing a second or two before turning right on a red light.

**HB 4763** (<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/House/htm/2013-HIB-4763.htm>) will let city governments install ticket-issuing cameras at traffic lights, and mail tickets to car owners caught violating the red light.

The cameras will be operated by private firms, who will get first crack at the fines. The profits above the camera vendor costs will be split 50-50 by the city and the state government, with the latter going to General Funds, not to any safety programs.

“Red-light cameras” sound like a good traffic-safety measure when people first hear about them, said **National Motorists Association** (<http://www.motorists.org>) member James C. Walker from Ann Arbor, Michigan. “No one likes to see someone run a red light. Signal violations can be very dangerous. But they’re extremely rare. No one intentionally violates a signal.” Instead of discouraging serious violations, the red-light cameras will issue thousands of tickets for stopping a few inches too far into an intersection, being a few hundredths of a second too late at a red light, or not stopping for some length of time before turning right.

“Cities stand to make a huge amount of money by intentionally keeping the yellow light too short,” says Walker. “That is very dangerous in itself. This is one reason red-light cameras are often associated with increases in traffic crashes.” Michigan has no effective law regulating the length of a yellow light, nor preventing the installation of unneeded signals and stop signs.

**Automated ticket machines are illegal in Michigan** (<http://thenewspaper.com/news/27/2769.asp>), but are permitted in 26 states. However, things are not going smoothly in cities that use the cameras. “As soon as voters find out how red-light cameras really work, they usually organize to get rid of them” (<http://www.thenewspaper.com/news/36/3655.asp>),” says NMA’s Walker. “But the camera companies invest heavily in fighting citizen initiatives.” The Michigan bill would sharply restrict voters’ right to repeal a city’s camera law by referendum.

As of now, HB 4763 allows machines to issue tickets for red-light violations only. “But the same machines can also issue speeding tickets,” says Walker, and only a small change to the law would enable the automated speed traps to be turned on. “Michigan’s law requiring reasonable speed limits isn’t enforced by the courts,” says Walker, “Cities write thousands of illegal speeding tickets. Red-light cameras are just the opening act for the real money-maker: photo radar.”

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The costs to motorists won't stop with the fines and fees. Insurance premiums can rise following an automated traffic ticket, costing families hundreds more per year. "Michigan drivers are facing a powerful combination of local governments, camera vendors, and insurance companies," says NMA's Walker. "Now that automated enforcement has found its way into the Michigan legislature, we will see who has more influence: moneyed interests or seven million drivers."

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**About the National Motorists Association:**

Founded in 1982, the National Motorists Association is a North American grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to the protection of motorists' rights and freedoms. The NMA was instrumental in repealing the 55 mph National Maximum Speed Limit. Since then, the organization has fought for reasonable speed limits, an end to speed traps, fairer traffic courts and against using traffic tickets to generate revenue.